

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

This document presents alternative strategies for reviewing Federal activities for consistency with the Albemarle-Pamlico Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The Albemarle-Pamlico Management Conference will use this report to select a Federal consistency review strategy in compliance with Section 320(b)(7) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). This document also provides a preliminary list of Federal activities that could conflict with or further the CCMP goals. The Management Conference will use this list to select Federal activities subject to consistency review with the Albemarle-Pamlico CCMP.

B. BACKGROUND

Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, as amended in 1987, establishes the National Estuarine Program (NEP) to identify, protect, and restore estuaries of national significance (Appendix A). The Albemarle-Pamlico (A/P) estuarine system was designated an estuary of national significance in 1987. A Management Conference made up of representatives from Federal and State agencies, academic institutions, industries, and citizen groups was convened to fulfill seven purposes outlined in Section 320(b). The A/P Management Conference consists of a Policy Committee, a Technical Committee, an Albemarle Citizens' Advisory Committee, and a Pamlico Citizens' Advisory Committee. The primary purpose of the Management Conference is to prepare a CCMP for the A/P system. The CCMP will recommend priority corrective actions and compliance schedules to restore and maintain the ecological integrity of the estuary and to protect designated uses.

In addition to requiring preparation of the CCMP, Section 320(b)(7) requires the Management Conference to review Federal financial assistance programs and direct development projects for consistency with the CCMP goals. In general, consistency reviews provide a role for State and local agencies in the planning of Federal activities. Under Section 320(b)(7), the Management Conference can identify conflicts between proposed Federal activities and State and local programs, policies, and regulations that make up the CCMP. The review process encourages intergovernmental cooperation to minimize inconsistent Federal activities that could jeopardize the success of the CCMP. The review process can also identify proposed Federal actions that can enhance CCMP implementation.